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July 14, 2003  
Immediate Release

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## **Environment, Health Departments Issue Smoke Advisory**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) today issued a health advisory for areas of Northern New Mexico affected by smoke from the Molina Complex fire and urge area residents to minimize their exposure to smoke.

The Department of Health recommends that sensitive groups, such as the elderly, small children, or any individual with respiratory or heart problems, leave the area until the smoke dissipates or stay inside as much as possible. Citizens are also urged not to use swamp coolers as they will pull the smoke inside.

Air quality conditions associated with smoke are especially important for people with underlying health conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and cardiovascular disease. If symptoms associated with these pre-existing conditions do not respond to your usual recommended medications, see a health care provider immediately.

NMED's Air Quality Bureau operates continuous particulate matter monitoring equipment in Santa Fe. Readings from that monitor (and other monitors operated by the Forest Service) show that the smoke from the fires is at a level that is unhealthy for sensitive groups, especially in the evenings and early morning hours when the winds are light.

The highest hourly value recorded for fine particulate matter in Santa Fe was 106 micrograms per cubic meter at 8 am this morning. According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards, levels between 81 and 175 micrograms per cubic meter are unhealthy for sensitive groups. It is likely that smoke concentrations are significantly higher closer to the fires, such as in the villages of Cundiyo and Chimayo.

In areas without real-time particulate monitors, visibility can serve as a good surrogate in determining air quality. The following chart includes guidelines for extrapolating air quality from observed visibility.

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Categories	Visibility in Miles	Particulate levels (averaged 1 hour, $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ )
Good	10 miles and up	0 - 40
Moderate	6 to 9	41 - 80
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	3 to 5	81 - 175
Unhealthy	1 1/2 to 2 1/2	176 - 300
Very Unhealthy	1 to 1 1/4	301 - 500
Hazardous	3/4 mile or less	over 500

#### Procedure for Making Personal Observation to Determine Smoke Concentrations

- ☐ Face away from the sun
- ☐ Determine the limit of your visibility range by looking for targets at known distances (miles).  
Visible range is that point at which even the high contrast objects totally disappear
- ☐ After determining visibility in miles, use the chart to determine health effect and appropriate cautionary statement.

For further information on smoke, go to NMED's Web page:

<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/Wildfire-PM.html>, or contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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